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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: CHAVEZ LOOKING INSIDE AND OUT

REF: A. CARACAS 3506
[1](#)B. CARACAS 3536

Classified By: Abelardo A. Arias, Political Counselor,
for Reasons 1.4(b).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Fresh from electoral victories in August and October, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is deepening his Bolivarian Revolution with a new ten-point strategy. Chavez now plans to create a "new political infrastructure" that integrates social action groups and forces political parties to elect their candidates for office. He has also launched a round of international outreach based on his desire to create a "multi-polar" world where U.S. influence is lessened, aiming at Spain, Libya, Russia, Iran, Qatar, and China by the end of the year. Rather than deepening the revolution, Chavez's plans seem more geared toward ensuring his re-election in [1](#)2006. End summary.

Many Meetings To Chart The Course

[1](#)2. (C) On November 11, President Hugo Chavez announced ten strategies, called "The New Strategic Map," meant to re-orient the political, social, economic, bureaucratic, and geopolitical posture of the GOV. He followed up the announcement with a two-day retreat of senior government officials and allied governors and mayors November 12-13 at Fuerte Tiuna in Caracas. The GOV announced that a coordinating mechanism consisting of ministers and governors had been established to carry out the new strategy. Vice President Jose Vicente Rangel announced he would head a presidential committee to flesh out an anti-poverty plan, following Chavez's strategies, to be unveiled before Christmas. While most of Chavez's strategies are his usual statist policies (refs a and b), his proposal for a "new political structure" and a "multi-polar" foreign policy are particularly relevant, especially given Chavez's increased control of state and local governments and the lack of an organized political opposition.

"A New Political Structure" In The Works

[1](#)3. (C) Domestically, Chavez plans overhaul his political base among the social organizations that support his administration. Chavez asserted that his revolutionary movement has until the 2006 presidential elections to consolidate and make these organizations stronger. He included in this list the Electoral Battle Units (UBEs); the Francisco Miranda Front (Cuban-trained Venezuelan "social workers"); the Cuban-operated medical clinics; health committees in the slums; land committees in rural areas (which work for land re-distribution for the poor); working groups on water; and the facilitators for the "mission" programs. Minister of Communication Andres Izarra said the UBEs would be re-christened "Endogenous Battle Units," a reference to Chavez's philosophy for fomenting domestic production among the poor. Izarra said the new UBEs would be fortified by "popular communication centers" to bring technology to poor areas. He also said this infrastructure would be used to mobilize voters in 2006, with the ambitious goal of winning 10 million votes for Chavez.

[1](#)4. (C) Chavez also vowed to institute procedures for democratically selecting pro-Chavez candidates in future elections, instead of naming them personally as he did for the October 31 regional elections. He said that the high abstention rate among Chavez supporters during the October 31 referendum was caused by resentment over the manner in which candidates are selected. Chavez lamented that in the past he has had to resort to hand-picking candidates, but claimed he was forced to do so by party leaders who "had not consulted anyone" at the grass roots level. (In fact, the 1999 Constitution mandates internal election of candidates and

political party chiefs, though this has yet to be implemented.)

Bi-Polar Plus Uni-polar Equals Multi-Polar

15. (C) Internationally, Chavez has returned to his "multi-polar world" theme as a rhetorical defense against the perceived dominance of the United States. Chavez claimed that, after the recall vote, Venezuela had been "re-legitimized," not only his government but his political system, which he said had been stigmatized by the media. Since the regional elections, Chavez has visited Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. He also recently received a state visit from Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte. He is currently on a trip to Spain, Libya, Russia, Iran, and Qatar. Chavez plans to visit China in December. In addition, newly-appointed Foreign Minister Ali Rodriguez told reporters in Spain November 21 the GOV will push for the "democratization" of international organizations such as the UN and OAS.

Comment

16. (C) Chavez's ten strategies are the beginnings of his campaign for the 2006 presidential election. His "new political structure" attempts to maintain the network of diverse social action groups, largely state-subsidized, that supported his successful recall referendum campaign. Integrating "mission" personnel and Cuban-trained social workers into this political structure blurs the lines between the state and pro-Chavez political organizations even more. Chavez also shows his preference for mass organizations over political parties, which are highly suspect in his leader-people model of governance.

17. (C) Feeling drenched in legitimacy from the referendum win, Chavez will continue to reach out personally to countries that might be sympathetic to his anti-U.S. rhetoric (China, Spain, Libya, etc.). He will push regional integration efforts such as Mercosur that might challenge U.S. interests. He also seems disposed to use his oil muscle to influence smaller countries, geo-politically unimportant but with votes in the OAS and other international organizations. International outreach is important to Chavez domestically as it allows him to portray the Bolivarian Revolution as gaining acceptance in the world, no matter what the reality might be.

Brownfield

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